FREEDOM WATCH

The Citizens Project Newsletter

Vol. 1, No. 2 September, 1992

WHO WE ARE

In the Pikes Peak area, we are seeing a push toward prayer in the schools, pressure to modify school curriculum to reflect religious views, the rise of extremist candidates in elections, increased anti-gay activity, and growing religious intolerance. Citizens Project was formed to challenge these trends.

We represent citizens from a broad spectrum of political parties and religious beliefs who are concerned about these threats to our constitutional freedoms by local sectarian and political extremists. We are dedicated to maintaining the traditional American values of separation of church and state, freedom of religion and speech, pluralism, individuality, and tolerance and compassion for others.

Citizens Project will monitor attempts to challenge these time-honored American values in our local community and will disseminate information on these challenges to our supporters. With your help we will provide a countervoice to extremist views in the Pikes Peak region and right the balance against those who would threaten our basic freedoms.

We invite you to participate in this process with us.

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SCHOOL CENSORSHIP

People for the American Way, a Washington D.C. based watch-dog organization, has been monitoring school censorship attempts for the past ten years. They document efforts to remove or restrict the use of particular curricular or school library materials. Their newly released Attacks on the Freedom to Learn 1991-1992 Report indicates that the schoolbook censors were more active in the past school year than in any of the ten years that PFAW has been monitoring these attempts. Challenges to school library materials more than doubled over the previous year.

These challenges come from a number of sources; some are concerned parents acting independently, but many were instigated by religious right organizations. In several cases, clear patterns emerge when the same books or curricula are targeted in different parts of the country and the same language is used to call for their removal. The right-wing organizations instigating book challenges have found they are more effective if complainants appear to be parents acting independently, and therefore parents often deny affiliation with national organizations. In other cases there is no formal affiliation, but parents have been encouraged, through published or radio reports sponsored by these national groups, to file complaints.

Some school programs have come under repeated attack. According to the PFAW report, "... three self-esteem programs designed to help students face the mounting pressures of childhood came under repeated fire from such organizations this year. *Pumsy: In Pursuit of Excellence*; *Developing Understanding of Self and Others* ("DUSO"); and *Quest: Skills for Growing* were challenged in 15 communities this year, in most cases, by groups or individuals affiliated with Citizens for Excellence in Education." (See the Wall Street Journal article on CEE on page 4).

In Colorado Springs the Pumsy self-esteem educational series was restricted at Pioneer Elementary School in the 1991-92 school year following 23 complaints by parents. These complaints followed articles on the Pumsy series by Citizens for Excellence in Education (CEE) and by Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum, and critical reports by certain radio stations.

People for the American Way identified the groups most active in the nationwide school censorship effort: "Despite the efforts of Far Right and Religious Right groups to conceal their activities, the work of a number of organizations and individuals across the country came to light... [t]he most active were the following:

- Citizens for Excellence in Education, easily the most destructive censorship organization active in the schools today;
- James Dobson's Focus on the Family, whose enormous following gives its various publications considerable reach;
- Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum, whose materials turned up in communities across the nation;
- Reverend Donald Wildmon's American Family Association and its legal arm the American Family Association Law Center, which has made a cottage industry out of taking small school systems to court; [and]
- Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition, whose new legal arm is led by

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SCHOOL CASE UPDATE

As you may recall, a lawsuit was filed in May 1992 against the Woodland Park schools to force them to stop teaching about mythology without also teaching the Bible, and to teach the Bible as the source of American morality.

The suit, filed by five Woodland Park parents, named as defendants the Colorado Commissioner of Education and the Woodland Park Board of Education. Although the lawsuit made news when it was first filed, nothing more has appeared in the newspapers since then.

The essence of this suit is captured in this excerpt from the Plaintiffs' Brief: "Plaintiffs..are asserting that morality must be taught and that the content of the Bible can be used as a historical reference to teach morality, in a secular program of education."

Here is the status of the case. The defendants have each filed motions to dismiss, and these motions are now pending before the judge. A ruling on these motions is expected shortly. After reviewing the motions, responses, and briefs filed by all parties in this case, we expect the defendants will prevail, and the lawsuit will be dismissed in the near future. In the event that the suit is not dismissed, then the plaintiffs (the Woodland Park parents) are hoping for a multi-day trial in early 1993. What an event that would be!

Based on conversations with people familiar with the religious right, we believe this lawsuit to force the Bible into schools under the guise of morality was a rogue tactic, unlikely to be repeated in the same form elsewhere in Colorado.

We will continue to keep you informed on this lawsuit.

SCHOOL CENSORSHIP, CONTINUED

noted anti-church/state-separation activist Jay Sekulow.."

Focus on the Family is based in Colorado Springs, CEE and American Family Association have Colorado Springs chapters, and Eagle Forum and Christian Coalition are quite active in our state, with state headquarters in the Denver area. Amber Jergensen, state coordinator of CEE and founder of the new Colorado Springs-based organization Colorado Family Coalition, lives in Colorado Springs.

Calls for censorship are often transmitted through a number of these organizations. For example, in a June, 1990 *Citizen* magazine article entitled, "What's New in School? Lesbians and Wizards," Focus on the Family encourages Christian parents to challenge materials, and refers them to Citizens for Excellence in Education for further help.

The "Impressions" series, challenged in 45 locales during the 1990-91 school year, is another good example. This literature-based series was targeted by the far right for "negativism, being morally depressing, usurping parental authority, lacking literary value, and emphasizing the occult, witchcraft and Satanism." Impressions was first targeted by Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum in 1988, then attacked by Focus on the Family in three articles in its *Citizen* magazine (in 1990 and 1991) and by Concerned Women For America, and finally was the subject of legal actions in Willard, Ohio and Woodland, California brought by the American Family Association Law Center. Challengers in Willard went further, filing a ballot petition to undercut the school system's funding, but promising to abandon the petition if the Impressions series was pulled. The series features work by A.A. Milne, Martin Luther King, Jr., Maurice Sendak, Madeleine L'Engle, Laura Ingalls Wilder, Dr. Seuss, Rudyard Kipling and C.S. Lewis, among its 822 selections.

The types of books and curricula challenged by the far right exhibit certain patterns. According to the PFAW report, most challenges "involved charges that materials 'endorsed' what challengers considered religious practices at odds with their own sectarian views." These challenged materials were labeled "anti-Christian," "Satanic," "occultistic," or "New Age." Some of the programs targeted included a "Stretch to Win" exercise tape that was seen to be "like yoga, promoting meditation and out of body experiences" and "should not be allowed, just as prayer is not allowed," and a four-day environmental program targeted for promoting "New Age" and "Native American" thinking. Self-esteem and values clarification programs generally fall into this area, as they are feared to place an inner personal authority above an absolute external authority (or above parental authority, thereby undermining the family).

The second most common challenge was the perceived use of objectionable language or profanity; and the third was sexual content or situations. James and the Giant Peach, The Grapes of Wrath, and Slaughterhouse Five were among books challenged in these categories.

And finally, there have been and continue to be numerous sex-education and AIDS-education challenges. These generally attempt to change existing sex-education programs to "abstinence-only" curricula (such as Sex Respect and Teen-Aid) which do not mention contraceptives or "safe

(continued on next page, column one)

CENSORSHIP, CONTINUED

sex" and which emphasize sex as limited to marriage. AIDS-education, the challengers fear, condones and promotes sexual activity and, even worse, promotes an understanding and acceptance of gay men and lesbians.

Since Colorado Springs has active local chapters of these national organizations, we are likely to see more censorship challenges in the Pikes Peak area this year.

In addition to censorship, we may see attempts to add curriculum. In a March, 1992 *Citizen* article, parents are encouraged to get the text Of Pandas and People into high school biology classes as a "balance" to evolutionary theory. Article author Mark Hartwig, Colorado Springs resident, argues that this text, based on a theory of "intelligent design" (an intelligent force designed the universe) is not creationist, but others disagree.

A school's most effective tool to defend its curriculum while genuinely evaluating complaints from parents is to develop and follow clear and consistent guidelines for review of material. According to PFAW, in the ten years that they have been monitoring censorship, many schools have implemented such guidelines and, when followed, these procedures generally reaffirm the original curriculum review process. However, in too many cases guidelines are not followed, and challenged materials are simply removed from use to avoid controversy.

If you are aware of present or impending school curriculum or library challenges, please let Citizens Project know. We can provide background information for understanding challenges from the religious right, and we can also help alert interested parents and others.

ON THE POLITICAL FRONT

"...the delegates adopted a rigidly conservative platform largely dictated by Christian fundamentalists who now virtually control the party on social issues. The blueprint included uncompromising opposition to abortions and limiting the rights of homosexuals." *...From the* Denver Post, *August 18, 1992, regarding the national Republican Convention.*

Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition and other far right religio-political groups have met with considerable success in taking power within the Republican party. The national Republican platform reflects the restrictive definition of "family values" that serves to limit the rights of many Americans. A number of state Republican platforms also reflect this far right agenda: in Washington state, the approved platform calls for a ban on "witchcraft in the schools, abortion under all circumstances and homosexuals working in the health care field or as teachers." The Iowa and Texas platforms oppose any classification of "traditional methods of discipline" as child abuse. The Republican Party in Colorado does not have a state-wide platform.

Christian Coalition is active in Colorado. Last spring, prior to the Colorado political caucuses, Christian Coalition along with Citizens for Responsible Government (the Denver based anti-choice group) published A Christian's Guide to the Colorado Political System. This booklet was subsequently used for political caucus trainings at churches. A CRG training was held at Colorado Springs' New Life Church; and later at New Life Church Gregg Cunningham led a Christian Action Council training entitled "How to Elect Pro-Life Candidates."

The Christian Coalition uses two key approaches to aid their efforts: **voter identification** and **voter guides**. The national organization has developed an elaborate system for identifying and motivating like-minded voters. They phone voters in a targeted precinct, asking for their party affiliation and which presidential candidate they voted for in 1988. If the voter answers "Democrat" and "Dukakis", they discontinue the call because, as Ralph Reed, the Christian Coalition's Executive Director says, "...we don't even want them to know there's an election going on...". If the voters are Republicans, or voted for George Bush, they are asked about abortion, or another key issue in the "family values" platform. They are then asked what they feel is the most important issue facing their geographic area. These issues are coded into 43 "issue burdens". The identified voters subsequently receive a computer-generated letter from the Christian Coalition candidate in their area, which includes a stock paragraph tailored to their stated issue of concern. And, if the voter is pro-choice, their letter does not mention abortion for, as Ralph Reed admits, "I'll take the votes of pro-abortion Republicans" to get anti-abortion candidates into office.

The Christian Coalition is very active in Fort Collins and surrounding Larimer County. According to Karen Brailsford, Vice-Chairman of the Larimer County Republican Central Committee, five far-right caucus trainings were held in Larimer County, four of them in churches. Further, over 60% of the Republican precinct committee people in her county are believed to be from

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★★★ EASTERN EDITION WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1992 CHICOPEE, MASSACHUSETTS

Church and State

Crusader Vows to Put God Back Into Schools Using Local Elections

Robert Simonds and Disciples Exploit Voters' Apathy Toward School Boards

Must Jack and Jill Be Banned?

By SONIA L. NAZARIO
Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

COSTA MESA, Calif. – One summer evening, Robert Simonds fell to his knees, began to pray and had a vision, he says. Mr. Simonds, then a college math teacher, saw himself floating above the U.S., gazing down on thousands of children with tear-streaked cheeks, all begging, "Please, come and help me."

To Mr. Simonds, a one-time preacher, the vision a decade ago was a summons to a higher calling: bringing God back to America's public schools. Mr. Simonds left his teaching job to launch a new organization, Citizens for Excellence in Education (CEE), dedicated to restoring prayer in the classroom, banishing anti-biblical language and teaching the story of creation in science classes.

Today his fundamentalist group has seats on hundreds of local school boards from Xenia, Ohio, to Vista, Calif., and controls voting blocs on scores of them. That may be just the beginning. In November, CEE-backed candidates are expected to capture majorities on some boards, as the group mobilizes a quiet but powerful grass-roots army determined to transform a school system it believes has turned immoral and atheistic.

Robert Simonds

The group usually enters a community when Mr. Simonds, 66 years old, gets a request to speak from a church group, often in conservative rural and suburban communities. The normally soft-spoken man exhorts his audience to take control of the schools. And because of great apathy toward many school-board elections, a small organization like his can have large effects.

Since 1989, Mr. Simonds claims, CEE's 925 chapters have helped elect 1,965 school-board members. This year's goal: 3,100 more, as CEE marches toward its goal of taking over all 15,400 U.S. school boards. Meanwhile, as the movement has grown, Mr. Simonds has tried to assuage nonreligious audiences by telling them he only wishes to teach traditional family values.

While the number of CEE's victories can't be independently verified, the group clearly worries opponents. People for the American Way, a liberal constitutional-rights group founded by producer Norman Lear, claims that CEE chapters have been instrumental in a large increase in school censorship attempts over the past two years. His group has rushed out a questionnaire to school districts to assess CEE's growth in influence. The Institute for First Amendment Studies Inc., a nonprofit group in Great Barrington, Mass., is sending letters to the heads of the nation's school districts warning of CEE's activities.

"This movement could significantly affect what children are taught in public schools," says Scott Plotkin, president of the California School Boards Association.

Already, CEE members have pressed a San Antonio, Texas, school board into banning "Little Red Riding Hood" from the library's regular shelves, saying the grandmother's drinking wine is inappropriate for a children's book. Two Xenia, Ohio, CEE-backed board members persuaded their board to reject a state-mandated AIDS curriculum and helped to abolish "Kids for Healthy Families," a self-esteem program for elementary schools. Morton, Ill., CEE members last year persuaded the local school board to include the biblical story of Genesis in science classes.

Wrong and Right

Sitting behind the smoked windows at his office in an industrial mall in Costa Mesa, south of Los Angeles, Mr. Simonds talks heatedly about how schools strip children of their religious faith by not teaching them about God. "Public schools teach no absolutes, no God, no wrong or right," he says. In a manual he distributes to parents and teachers, called "Communicating a Christian World View in the Classroom," he writes, "Our schools are the battleground."

Mr. Simonds, a graying man with silver-rimmed glasses, angrily dismisses the separation of church and state as "a socialist myth." Children should learn that a supernatural power created the world 6,000 years ago, he says. Books in classrooms and libraries should be banned if they include "anti-biblical" language or any reference to the occult. Sex education courses should teach that it's wrong to have sex before marriage. School counseling for homosexual teens, Mr. Simonds adds, is "recruitment of our innocent children" to a "deviant" life style.

"It would be wonderful to see Scripture read in schools so that children learn the truth," says Deidre Holliday, a Vista, Calif., school-board member who credits CEE for her 1990 victory. Teachers should tell students Christ is their savior, says

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Continued From First Page

Mrs. Holliday, as she serves her four children cookies in a living room adorned with a large portrait of Jesus. "This is our heritage. Anyone who comes into this country is welcome, but we shouldn't be diluted by others' beliefs."

Critics contend that Mr. Simonds has another, hidden agenda—to abolish public schools altogether. Until last year, Mr. Simonds served on the national coordinating committee of the California-based Coalition on Revival. The group seeks to abolish the Federal Reserve System and all public schools by the year 2000 and advocates the election of Christian government officials, including sheriffs to direct "Christian" militias. Mr. Simonds says he wants to transform, not abolish, public schools; he also wants a federal voucher system that would help Christians send their children to religious schools.

Also among Mr. Simonds's allies is the Rev. Billy Falling of Escondido, Calif. In a recent book, "The Political Mission of the Church," Mr. Falling, director of the Christian Voters League, says government must be "the police department within the Kingdom of God on earth," ready to "impose God's vengeance upon those who abandon God's laws of justice." Mr. Simonds says he sells Mr. Falling's book, but doesn't agree with everything in it.

Mr. Simonds's antagonism toward public schools began at an early age. The youngest of 12 children, he grew up "among the black and browns" of East Los Angeles, always running, he says, to "get to school alive." A World War II aviator, he credits several wartime brushes with death for steering him toward God. He was a pastor for four years until "God called me to teach," he says, laying his hand on a well-worn Bible in the middle of his desk.

For 20 years as a math instructor at Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa, Mr. Simonds says he sought to "win souls to Jesus Christ." He began each lesson by projecting Scripture onto the classroom wall. When a Jewish student or a Hare Krishna follower objected, he would beckon them into his office, tell them never to interrupt him again and read them more Scripture, he says. Repeated complaints about Mr. Simonds's proselytizing during math lectures led the college president to insist that he "cease and desist," a college spokesman says.

Mr. Simonds says he became increasingly troubled by his students' lack of moral stricture; many would come to class on drugs, he adds. After years of frustration over failure to get a constitutional amendment on school prayer and losing battles to make curriculum changes, he became convinced that his movement would have to work at the local level.

Mr. Simonds now treks from state to state sleeping in the handiest Motel 6 and attending "banquets," usually home-cooked meals set up by a local church group. About 300 faithful flocked to one gathering in a Hagerstown, Md., hotel dining room to hear his accusations against public schools. "But for the grace of God, I survived the public schools," Mr. Simonds told the throng. "Praise the Lord," the crowd responded.

Among Mr. Simonds's oft-repeated stories is one about a 16-year-old Georgia girl who developed a 105-degree fever and was rushed to a doctor, who grilled her parents: "My God, who did this to your daughter? She's had an abortion by a butcher!" The girl regained consciousness and said school officials had driven her to an abortion clinic. Georgia officials say that they have checked out the story and that it's not true.

After local CEE chapters are launched, Mr. Simonds sends out a stream of newsletters, urges members to tune in to one of the 76 radio stations that broadcast his weekly program, and he sells his books on how to take over local school districts. An affiliated group, the National Association of Christian Educators, works to persuade teachers to promote CEE's agenda in their classrooms. "He believes students should make a decision to receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and that teachers should be presenters of God's truth," says Roy Grimm, who recently completed a Ph.D. dissertation about Mr. Simonds.

In kindling the faithful, Mr. Simonds's rhetoric knows few bounds. At a Gospel rally at the San Jose, Calif., Crossroads Bible Church, he prods the crowd. "In your district there is a superintendent who's a homosexual," he says, without giving specifics. "There's a top guidance guy who's a homosexual. There are several teachers who are lesbians." Several members of the audience gasp, then give him a standing ovation.

Mr. Simonds often lashes out at the National Education Association. He criticizes the teachers' union for promoting the "whole-word" rather than the phonics approach to reading, calling it part of a Communist plot to undermine America by fomenting illiteracy. Paul Putnam, NEA's senior professional associate, says CEE and other such groups have been raising the Red flag to rally people to their cause since the 1960s. "A vocal minority can take over the school," he says. "It works."

With the help of TV evangelist Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition and other groups on the religious right, observers say, CEE has a good chance of achieving some school-board majorities this fall, especially in places like conservative San Diego County in Southern California. Two dozen CEE-backed school-board candidates swept into office more than a year ago to form minorities on many of the district's 48 school boards.

Since then, the Escondido, Calif., school board, with two CEE-backed members, has adopted an abstinence-only sex education curriculum. Some parents are now calling for a ban on the witch-filled "Wizard of Oz," and in one Escondido elementary school, tiny Bibles were stuffed into classroom Christmas stockings. The Vista, Calif., board has been presented with measures to ban drug-abuse education and self-esteem programs.

Linda Steele, who heads the San Diego county chapter of CEE, calls its efforts a drive "to take over the school boards and debunk the myth of separation of church and state," a separation she believes was foisted on the country by the Supreme Court of the 1960s. "This is going to be warfare," she vows of November's elections. "We'll use prayer and God's way."

The new activism on the right already has turned many school-board meetings from sparsely attended and soporific affairs into standing-room-only battles, complete with hissing and booing. "I don't want anyone putting forward their religion on my son," fumes Ken Blalack, a San Diego County father of two, who has helped form groups to oppose the Christian activists. "And not to address sex education is a real threat to my son's life."

Many parents in the San Diego area say they fear groups like CEE will gain power by not disclosing their true agenda. "They use stealth campaign techniques to put people with extremist views in office," says Rita Collier, a parent in La Mesa. Candidates hid their views by refusing to participate in electoral debates or not filing candidate statements, she says. But Christians were blanketed with appeals to vote: 200,000 fliers were put on windshields in church parking lots, and phone banks using church directories and anti-abortion petitions were used to prod church-goers to vote. Mr. Simonds tells CEE members not to disclose their links to the group or say "kooky" things.

"Parents are very afraid," says Sharon Jones, another La Mesa parent. "If they get a majority, things will change." Earlier this year, she and 30 other parents gathered at the United Church of Christ to plot a counterattack: a political-action committee to keep a third conservative Christian from being elected to their five-member school board.

Some teachers are also fighting back. Last fall, Vista teachers won an "academic freedom" clause in their contract to protect their right to teach lawful material relevant to a course. "We feel beaten up and distrusted," says Tamara Drean, former head of the Vista Teachers Association, who fears teachers may be censoring themselves to avoid CEE attacks. Some teachers watched a board meeting in horror as a few parents argued that "Jack and Jill" should be purged on the ground that the children's fall is a metaphor for a descent into hell. The nursery rhyme stayed, but Voltaire's "Candide" was removed from high school English classes because of a passing reference to two women whose lovers were monkeys.

Mr. Simonds hopes the November elections will let CEE-backed candidates make more such changes. "We can take complete control of all local school boards," he tells his followers. "Our time has come!"

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SINGLE TEACHERS

Citizens Project has received numerous reports about lists of single teachers and/or gay and lesbian teachers that local far right religious or political groups are supposedly soliciting from local school districts. We have heard many different versions of this story. To date, we have been unable to verify any versions, and school superintendents Ken Burnley (District 11) and Tom Crawford (District 20) both have indicated that their administrations have not been approached for this information.

The search for such a list may or may not be occurring in Colorado Springs at this time. However, such an activity would not be inconsistent with the ideology of a number of far right groups who continue to see gay and lesbian teachers as threats and abominations to be identified and exposed.

Citizens Project is concerned by this story for many reasons.

- If the story is not true, are people changing their behaviors based on an unfounded fear? Is the community being unnecessarily polarized?

- If the story is true, how can we as a concerned community respond to protect teachers' jobs and support our fellow citizens?

We would like to put these rumors to rest or to verify them. If you have information that will do either, please contact Amy Divine at 685-9899.

If there is a threat to teachers based solely on marital status or sexual orientation, then Citizens Project will become involved to help identify the threat and protect the rights and careers of those individuals being threatened.

POLITICAL FRONT, CONTINUED

the Christian right, and this group is likely to control the Larimer County Republican Central Committee after the party elections this February. In Larimer County District 52, 6,000 voters were called as part of the Christian Coalition voter identification process, and District 52 candidate Dan Nygard, a pro-life assistant pastor who did not identify himself in his literature as such, subsequently won his primary election for State Representative. Currently, the Christian Coalition in Larimer County is preparing a voters guide for distribution to its interested voters.

The right-wing organizations Christian Coalition, Citizens for Accountability in Government, Citizens for Responsible Government, and Rocky Mountain Family Council are preparing guides for Colorado voters. To quote the Christian Coalition's motto, "If God's people don't make it into office, God's principles don't make it into office."

The Christian Coalition appears to be less active in El Paso County at this time. One state Republican party official believes that Jefferson, Boulder, and Larimer Counties were targeted by the religious right in the primary elections and that Larimer and Weld Counties are now dominated by the right. That official also speculates that less effort was placed in El Paso County because the far right believed the county was "locked up" due to the conservative nature of the area.

We have some evidence that Christian Coalition utilized its phone poll voter identification program in El Paso County prior to the August primary, but Citizens Project does not have evidence that it was widely used. Their sometimes partner, Citizens for Responsible Government, did leaflet in church parking lots the Sunday before the primary. We obtained two of these leaflets, one for Ken Gray and one for Darrell Barnes. These leaflets were identical - the stated pro-life positions put forward for Barnes and Gray were exactly the same, and the opposing positions ascribed to opponents Morrison and Martin were also stated identically, reflecting a distorted position that neither of these candidates holds. The leaflets themselves were identical; only the candidates' names had been changed.

The only far right El Paso County candidate to win a Republican primary race this year was Victor Mote in District 17. The Republican primary race in District 22 was extremely close, with Ken Gray defeated by only 27 votes. Some far right candidates ran unopposed in the primaries, and these candidates will be on the ballot in the November election.

Taking a cue from Christian Coalition, Citizens Project will publish a voters guide next month that will help identify candidate positions of interest to our community, and we will supply more information in our next newsletter to help you make informed choices in the November election.

If you have candidate information to share, please let us know. Likewise, if you have been contacted or are contacted in the future by a Christian Coalition voter identification phone poll, please let us know.

D-11 PANEL UPDATE

In April 1992 Colorado Springs School District 11 canceled gay and pagan participants from a diversity symposium after receiving 27 complaints, many from people calling themselves Christians. After canceling these participants (but not the symposium), the school administration received another 48 calls criticizing it for making the cancellation decision.

At a contentious May 13 school board meeting on this issue, the administration gave a justification for canceling the participants, and various members of the public presented strongly held views pro and con. The school board, however, did not reverse or criticize the school administration's decision to ban the gay and pagan panelists.

The controversy continues to move along. The Colorado Springs Teachers Association filed a grievance against the School District on May 15. The grievance requested that the "banned" gay and pagan participants be allowed the opportunity to speak at the school to provide a suitable finish to the diversity symposium and to support academic freedom. The School District, in response to the grievance, did not agree, and the matter has now moved on to arbitration.

Arbitration on this issue is scheduled to take place November 9-11, 1992, with a decision to be made 4-6 weeks later. Colorado Springs Teachers Association will be represented through its own counsel, and there are indications that the ACLU may take an interest in this case as well.

We will keep you informed on this matter, as it meanders toward resolution.

BUSINESS HARASSMENT

We have received two reports of businesses being harassed by the far right. In one instance, therapist Greg Snyder, founder of the Rocky Mountain Men's Center and the Colorado Springs Men's Council, was contacted by a man claiming to be from Focus on the Family. This caller expressed his concern about the activities of the monthly men's community council meeting, stating that this was not the kind of work that men need, that Mr. Snyder was leading them to the devil, and that performing ceremonies in a men's context was satanic. Greg invited the caller to attend a meeting of the Men's Council to gain a better understanding of the organization, and did not hear from the caller again.

Regina, of Regina's Unique Botique, received three calls over three months. Two were from men identifying themselves as being from Focus on the Family and the third was from a woman identifying herself in the same way. Regina was told that these callers were offended by what she sells, how she dresses, and the displays in her window. They recommended she make changes. On the final call (about three weeks ago), Regina threatened to call the police, and she has not been contacted since.

Citizens Project contacted Focus on the Family, as it seemed unlikely that these attacks would have originated with their organization. Focus on the Family's Paul Hetrick assured Citizens Project that such activities would be a violation of Focus policy, and that "no one is authorized to make harassing calls." If the calls originated at Focus, they would have been made by individuals ignoring policy. Mr. Hetrick suggested that the calls were made by others in the community playing on the Focus on the Family name.

This kind of harassment is not legal. If you are harassed:

- Try to get the caller's name, the group they represent (if any), and a phone number where they can be reached.
- Take notes on the comments they make.
- Call the police at 578-6917 to report the harassing call, then go to the recommended police station to file and sign a report.
- Call US West at 636-6200. They will connect you with the US West identification program, and in some cases can help identify the incoming caller.
- After three calls have been documented to the police, they will try to identify the caller and serve them with a summons for a court date. The caller can be fined up to $750.
- If the calls continue, a restraining order can be placed against the caller or the group, if identified. You must see an attorney to arrange for a restraining order.
- Call the Citizens Project office at 685-9899. We will track these harassment calls to businesses to see if patterns emerge, and will report the existence of this harassment in our community.

This harassment of local business people on religious or ideological grounds, if it continues, will be a sad commentary on the growing intolerance in our community.

BALLOT ISSUES

Two of the upcoming November ballot issues have significant implications for civil rights. Amendment 2 (the "No Claim of Discrimination" amendment), and Amendment 8 (the "School Voucher" amendment) each raise issues regarding separation of church and state, with Amendment 2 also raising equal protection issues.

Enclosed with this newsletter is a one-page sheet that Citizens Project has prepared to clarify the most important issues of Amendment 2. Significant misinformation has been circulated by proponents of the amendment, so that many in Colorado wrongly believe that this amendment is about special rights, rather than protection from basic discrimination.

If you agree with our position, please make copies of this insert and distribute or post them. If you would like more in-depth information on Amendment 2, with positions pro and con, please call the Citizens Project office (685-9899) and we will send you an info packet. Please note that we have reproduced the exact language of Amendment 2 on the back of the Amendment 2 sheet.

We are just beginning to study the school voucher amendment. In the interim, we do have materials available, including the Colorado legislative analysis, that we can send you on this issue. Just call.

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Amy Divine and Doug Triggs
Coordinators

INSIDE CITIZENS PROJECT

Citizens Project has been growing rapidly since our birth in May. The mailing list now includes 1500 names and grows daily; our newsletter distribution is 4000 copies. Our committees are up and running: Schools, Politics, Watch, Amendment 2 Research, Legal, Outreach And Media, Volunteer And Phone Tree, and Fundraising. We've had a busy summer.

INTRODUCING OUR STEERING COMMITTEE

Martha Bartz is owner of Forest Hills Investments, a real estate firm, and a parent in District 11. She also volunteers with CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates). Martha chairs the Schools Committee.

Vicki Copeland is editor of the Cultwatch Response Newsletter and chair of the Watch Committee. She received her BA from the University of Oklahoma.

Amy Divine, MBA was a programmer, producer and start-up consultant for national and international cable networks, including National Geographic Explorer, Vision Interfaith Satellite Network, and Nickelodeon. She holds an MBA from UCLA and is a board member of Citizens Project.

Margi Duncombe, PhD. is Professor and Chair of the Sociology Department at Colorado College. Margi is the faculty advisor to the Bisexual, Gay and Lesbian Alliance and a Board Member of the Gay and Lesbian Community Center in Colorado Springs. Dr. Duncombe is chairing the Amendment 2 Research Committee for Citizens Project.

Bruce Loeffler, PhD. is an Associate Professor of Geology at Colorado College. Bruce works with the Bisexual, Gay and Lesbian Alliance, is chair of the Citizens Project Outreach and Media Committee, and is on the Citizens Project Board of Directors.

Dave Porter, DPhil. A career military officer, rescue helicopter pilot, and educator, he has a doctorate from Oxford University. Dave was president of All Souls Unitarian Church 1988-1990 and is a member of the Colorado Springs Total Quality Control Council. He is currently head of the department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership at the Air Force Academy; his participation on the Citizens Project Board of Directors is as an individual and does not reflect the support of his department or of any government agency.

Ellene Shapiro is on the Board of Directors of the Pikes Peak Urban League, a member of the El Paso County Planning Commission, and Vice-President of the Foundation for School District 11. She is also working on the Pikes Peak Festival of Learning. Ellene chairs the Citizens Project Politics Committee.

Richard Skorman is the owner of Poor Richard's Restaurant and Bookstore, the author of "Off-Hollywood Movies: A Film Lover's Guide", contributing author of the "1992 Earth Journal Environmental Almanac and Resource Directory", the Executive Director of The Environmental Film Resource Center and is currently on the Board of Directors of Project Eco-School and The Daily Planet Option Store. Richard is a Citizens Project board member.

Douglas Triggs, JD has been a practicing attorney in Colorado Springs since 1977. Doug is a board member of Citizens Project.

FUNDING APPEAL...IT'S THAT TIME

You bet--newsletters, postage, and long-distance phone calls all cost money! We need your help to keep Citizens Project working as your eyes and ears for constitutional rights and diversity in the Pikes Peak area. **Simply answer "yes" below--**

Yes, I want to help Citizens Project protect the rights of all citizens in the Pikes Peak area, so that our community may continue to reflect a diversity of individual and family values.

Donation amount enclosed:

__ $20 __$35 __$50 __$100 $_____Other

Make check payable to Citizens Project and mail to Box 2085, Colorado Springs, CO 80901. Because we lobby to protect civil liberties, contributions are not tax deductible. Thanks!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone(s): _____(day) _____(evening) _____(fax)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION!

Comments, suggestions, or offers to help:

* *

HOW COULD I HAVE WAITED SO LONG?

I'm not currently on the Citizens Project Mailing List, but I would like to be. Here is my name and address:

Name: _____

Occupation / Organization: _____

Address: _____

Phone(s): _____(day) _____(evening) _____(fax)

Send to Citizens Project, Box 2085, Colorado Springs, CO 80901.

Comments or suggestions: